27 - 29 November 2026 Vienna , Austria

Child Protection Experiences in Preschools: Teacher Readiness, Practical Responses, and Institutional Gaps in Indonesia

Mutiara Magta , Sofia Hartati , Nurjannah

State University of Jakarta/Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Kindergarten teachers play a strategic role in identifying, preventing, and responding to child protection issues in everyday school life. This study explores kindergarten teachers' experiences and interpretations of addressing child protection issues. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a multiple case study design involving four kindergarten teachers from Sukabumi, Bogor, Malang, and Jakarta with 3–16 years of teaching experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's reflective thematic analysis. The results indicate that teachers have encountered various child protection issues in their daily practice, but their preparedness remains limited and is largely informal. Exposure to child protection training is relatively minimal and largely takes the form of lecture-based seminars; while confidence increases after training, teachers view practical experience and opportunities to apply knowledge as more meaningful for building readiness to handle real-life situations. Teachers tend to rely on personal judgment and informal support when handling cases, due to the lack of clear guidelines. The absence of experience and procedures for documentation, reporting, and referral represents a significant gap in the relationship between teachers' responses and the child protection system. At the school level, leadership and collegial forums have not consistently integrated child protection, while communication with families can be a source of both support and uncertainty. The findings indicate that teacher readiness is a relational and institutional capacity that requires practice-based professional learning, school leadership, collaboration with families and the professional community, and clear child protection pathways.

Keywords: Child Protection; Early Childhood Education; School Leadership; Self-Efficacy; Teacher Readiness